

(2) Amended Claims

1. (Currently amended) A process for preparation of aerated, gelatin-containing confections comprising: (a) heating a mixture of mono, di and oligosaccharides in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture and obtain a concentrated sugar solution; (b) cooling the concentrated sugar solution; (c) separately mixing dry sucrose and dry gelatin to form a dry blend, wherein the dry gelatin and dry sucrose have similar particle sizes of less than 8 mesh; (d) hydrating the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin by mixing with water at a first temperature not exceeding 40°C and holding for a time sufficient for the gelatin to take up at least twice its weight in water to form a slurry of ~~essentially completely~~ hydrated gelatin in a sucrose solution; (e) then heating the slurry sufficiently to a higher temperature to dissolve the gelatin and form an aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin; (f) admixing the aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin with concentrated sugar solution to prepare a confection composition; and (g) aerating the confection composition, wherein the processing ~~is effective to cause~~ causes less *trans-to-cis* isomerization in the gelatin than would occur in ~~prior art~~ processing wherein gelatin and sucrose are mixed after forming solutions of each.

2. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the concentrated sugar solution has a solids content of at least 75% by weight.

3. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the ~~water for hydrating the gelatin is added at a temperature of less than about 40° C and the hold time in step (d) is at least about 10 minutes.~~

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 3 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.
7. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 6 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of about 40 mesh or less.
8. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the dry gelatin and dry sucrose are granulated to about the same particle sizes.
9. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 8 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.
10. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the mixture comprising mono, di and oligosaccharides was heated in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture to obtain a concentrated sugar solution having solids content of at least 75% by weight.
11. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 10 wherein the mixture is heated to obtain a concentrated sugar solution having solids content of from 80% to 85% by weight.
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)
14. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 3:1 to about 25:1.

15. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 11 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1.

16. (Currently amended) A dry blend consisting of sugar and gelatin, suitable for capable of producing an aerated confection characterized, after processing by a process entailing: (a) heating a mixture of mono, di and oligosaccharides in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture and obtain a concentrated sugar solution; (b) cooling the concentrated sugar solution; (c) separately mixing dry sucrose and dry gelatin to form the dry blend; (d) hydrating the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin to form a slurry of essentially completely hydrated gelatin in a sucrose solution; (e) heating the slurry sufficiently to dissolve the gelatin and form an aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin; (f) admixing the aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin with concentrated sugar solution to prepare a confection composition; and (g) aerating the confection composition; ~~the processing being effective to cause with less trans-to-cis isomerization in the gelatin than would occur in prior art processing wherein gelatin and sucrose are mixed after forming solutions of each, the dry blend consisting essentially of~~ sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1, wherein the sucrose and gelatin have about the same particle sizes of less than 8 mesh.

17. (Previously amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 10 mesh.

18. (Previously amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein the gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

19. (Previously amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of 40 mesh or less.

20. (Previously amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are both granulated to a particle size of less than 40 mesh.